

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 12, 2004

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
128 United States Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Stevens:

As you work through the appropriations bills, we want to thank you for your willingness to consider issues that are important to Wyoming. In our conversations with you in January, you assured us that you would address the two-year delay of country of origin labeling (COOL) implementation contained in the fiscal year 2004 omnibus appropriations conference report in the fiscal year 2005 appropriations process. Based on these discussions, we write to ask your continued assistance to implement mandatory COOL.

We maintain that implementing mandatory COOL will provide important and beneficial information to consumers. Given the choice, U.S. consumers will choose U.S. products. Mandatory COOL would give consumers that choice. During consideration of the fiscal year 2004 omnibus appropriations bill the Senate agreed with us by casting 58 votes in favor of mandatory implementation.

We opposed the inclusion of language in the 2004 omnibus appropriations conference report delaying COOL implementation from September 30, 2004 to September 30, 2006, except for wild and farm-raised fish. More recently, our concerns about efforts to delay the mandatory program were amplified when the House Agriculture Committee passed a measure that replaces mandatory COOL with an empty voluntary program. We believe some members of the House are not content with the current delay and may attempt to vitiate labeling with a voluntary program. This approach is wasted and unnecessary effort as the USDA already has an existing voluntary COOL program, as mandated by the 2002 Farm Bill.

We are aware that too much time has passed for USDA to properly implement the law through rulemaking and public comment by September 30, 2004. We are also aware that there is great potential for the House to continue to oppose mandatory labeling. However, given the Senate's

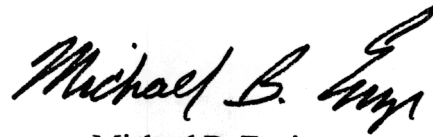
overwhelming support for mandatory COOL, we ask that during the appropriations process you resist any attempt to further delay or weaken COOL and that you stand firm with the Senate to implement mandatory COOL by September 30, 2006.

Thank you for your tireless efforts to complete the fiscal year 2005 spending bills. We look forward to your continued leadership on this issue and other important matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Craig Thomas". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Craig" being more prominent than the last name "Thomas".

Craig Thomas
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael B. Enzi". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being more prominent than the last name "Enzi".

Michael B. Enzi
United States Senator